

The Land of Broken Promises

A Stirring Story
of the Mexican
Revolution

By DANE COOLIDGE

Author of
"The Fighting Fool"

"Hidden Waters,"
"The Texican," Etc.

Illustrations by Don J. Lavin

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SYNOPSIS.

Bud Hooker and Phil De Lancey are forced, owing to a revolution in Mexico, to give up their mining claim and return to the United States. In the border town of Gadaden Bud meets Henry Kruger, a wealthy miser, who makes him a proposition to return to Mexico to acquire title to a very rich mine which Kruger had blown up when he found he had been cheated out of the title by one Aragon. The Mexican subsequently spent a large sum in an unsuccessful attempt to relocate the vein and then allowed the land to revert for taxes. Hooker and De Lancey arrive at Fortuna, near where the mine, known as the Eagle Tail, is located. They engage the services of Cruz Mendez, who has been friendly to Kruger, to acquire the title for them and get a permit to do preliminary work. Aragon protests and accuses them of jumping his claim. Bud discovers that matrimonial entanglements make it impossible for Mendez to secure a valid title to the land. Phil, who has become interested in Aragon's daughter, Gracia, decides to turn Mexican and get the title in his own name.

CHAPTER IX—Continued.

Undoubtedly, in his own way, he was in love—but he would never admit it, that he knew, too. So he sank down on the blankets and swore harshly, while De Lancey stared at him in unfeigned surprise.

"Well, then," he went on, taking Bud's answer for granted, "what're you making such a row about? Can't I go to a dance, with a girl without you jumping down my throat?"

"Why, sure you can!" rumbled Bud, now hot with a new indignation; "but after getting me to go into this deal against my will and swearing me to some damn-fool pledge, the first thing you do is to make friends with Aragon and then make love to his daughter. Is that your idea of helping things along? D'ye think that's the way a pardner ought to act? No, I tell you, it is not!"

"Aw, Bud," protested De Lancey plaintively, "what's the matter with you? Be reasonable, old man; I never meant to hurt your feelings!"

"Hurt my feelings!" echoed Hooker scornfully. "Hub, what are we down here for, anyway—a Sunday school picnic? My feelings are nothing, and they can wait; but we're sitting on a mine that's worth a million dollars mabe—and it ain't ours, either—and when you throw in with old Aragon and go to making love to his daughter you know you're not doing right! That's all there is to it—you're doing me and Kruger dirt!"

"Well, Bud," said De Lancey with mock gravity, "if that's the way you feel about it I won't do it any more!"

"I wish you wouldn't," breathed Bud, raising his head from his hands; "I sure wears me out, Phil, worrying about it."

"Well, then, I won't do it," protested Phil sincerely. "So that's settled—now who's going to turn Mexican citizen?"

"Suit yourself," said Bud listlessly. "I'll match you for it!" proposed De Lancey, diving into his pocket for money.

"Don't need to," responded Bud; "you can do what you please."

"No; I'll match you!" persisted Phil. "That was the agreement—whenever it was an even break we'd let the money talk. Here's your quarter—and if I match you I'll become the Mexican citizen. All set? Let 'er go!"

He flipped the coin into the air and caught it in his hand.

"Heads!" he called, without looking at it. "What you got?"

"Heads!" answered Bud, and Phil chuckled his money into the air again and laughed as it dropped into his palm.

"Heads she is again!" he cried, showing the Mexican eagle; "I never did see the time when I couldn't match you, anyway. So now, old socks, you can keep right on being a Texan and hating Mexicans like horny toads, and I'll denounce the Eagle Tail the minute the time is up. And I won't go near the Aragon outfit unless you're with me—is that a go? All right, shake hands on it, pard! I wouldn't quarrel with you for anything!"

"Aw, that's all right," mumbled Bud, rising and holding out his hand. "I knowed you didn't mean nothing." He sat down again after that and gazed dazedly out the door.

"Say, Bud," began Phil, his eyes sparkling with amusement. "I've got something to tell you about that dance last night. If I didn't put the crusher on Mr. Felix Luna and Manuel del Rey! Wow! I sure wished you were there to see me do it!"

"This Felix Luna is the son of an old sugar planter down in the hot country somewhere. He got run out by the revolution and now he's up here trying to make a winning with Gracia Aragon—unlike two noble families, and all that junk. Well, sir, of all the conked, swelled-up little squirts you ever saw in your life here's the limit, and yet the old man kind of favors him."

"But this Manuel del Rey is the captain of the rurales around here and a genuine Mexican fire-eater—all buckskin and fierce mustaches, and smells like chili peppers and garlic—and the two of 'em were having it back and forth as to who got the next dance with Gracia."

"Well, you know how it is at a Mexican dance—everybody is supposed to be introduced to everybody else—and when I saw those two young turkey-

cocks talking with their hands and eyebrows and everybody else backing off, I stepped in close and looked at the girl.

"And she's some girl, too, believe me! The biggest brown eyes you ever saw in your life, a complexion like cream, and hair—well, there never was such hair! She was fanning herself real slow, and in the language of the fan that means: 'This don't interest me a bit!' So, just to show her I was wise, I pulled out my handkerchief and dropped it on the floor, and when she saw me she stopped and began to count the ribs in her fan. That was my cue—it meant she wanted to speak with me—so I stepped up and said:

"Excuse me, senorita, but while the gentlemen talk—and if the senora, your mother, will permit—perhaps we can enjoy a dance?"

"And say, Bud, you should have seen the way she rose to it. The girl is a sport, believe me, and the idea of those two novies chewing the rag while she sat out the dance didn't appeal to her at all. So she gave me her hand and away we went, with all the old ladies talking behind their fans and Manuel del Rey blowing up like a volcano in a bunch of carambars or worse. Gee, it was great, and she could dance like a queen."

"But here's the interesting part of it—what do you think she asked me, after we'd had our little laugh? Well, you don't need to get so grouchy about it—she asked about you!"

"Aw!"

"Yes, she did! So you see what you got for throwing her down!"

"What did she ask?"

"Well, she asked—here he stopped and laughed—she asked if you were a cowboy!"

"Not!" cried Bud, pleased in spite of himself; "what does she know about cowboys?"

"Oh, she's wise!" declared Phil; "she's been to school twice in Los Angeles and seen the wild west show. Yes, sir, she's just like an American girl and speaks English perfectly. She told me she didn't like the Mexican men—they were too stuck on themselves—and say, Bud, when I told her

"I would sell his honor any time to defraud a Mexican of his rights, and I doubt not it was he who sent you here. Yes, I have known it from the first—but I will fool him yet!"

"So you are a Mexican citizen, Senor De Lancey? Bien, then you shall pay the full price of your citizenship. Before our law you are now no more than that poor pelado, Mendez. You cannot appeal now to your consul at Gadaden—you are only a Mexican! Very well!"

He shrugged his shoulders and smiled significantly.

"No," retorted De Lancey angrily; "you are right—I cannot appeal to my government! But let me tell you something, Senor Mexicano! An American needs no government to protect him—he has his gun, and that is enough!"

"Yes," added Bud, who had caught the drift of the last, "and he has his friends, too; don't forget that!" He strode over toward Aragon and menaced him with a threatening finger.

"If anything happens to my friend," he hissed, "you will have me to whip! And now, senor," he added, speaking in the idiom of the country, "go with God—and do not come back!"

"Pah!" spat back Aragon, his hate for the pushing foreigner showing in every glance; "I will beat you yet! And I pray God the revolution comes this way, if they take the full half of my cattle—so long as they get you two!"

"Very well," nodded Bud as Aragon and his men turned away, "but be careful you do not send any!"

"Good!" he continued, smiling grimly at the pallid Phil; "now we got him where we want him—out in the open. And I'll just remember them four palanos he had with him—they're his handy men, the boys with nerve—and don't never let one of 'em catch you out after dark."

De Lancey sat down on a rock and wiped his face.

"Heavens, Bud," he groaned, "I never would have believed it of him—I thought he was on the square. But it just goes to prove the old saying—every Mexican has got a streak of yellow in him somewhere. All you've got to do is to trust him long enough and you'll find it out. Well, we're hep to Mr. Aragon, all right!"

"I never seen one of these polite, palavering Mexicans yet," observed Bud sagely, "that wasn't crooked. And this feller Aragon is mean, to boot. But that's a game," he added, "that two can play at. I don't know how you feel, Phil, but we been kinder creeping and slipping around so long that I'm all cramped up inside. Never suffered more in my life than the last sixty days—being polite to that damn Mexican. Now it's our turn. Are you game?"

"Count me in!" cried De Lancey, rising from his rock. "What's the play?"

"Well, we'll go into town pretty soon," grinned Bud, "and if I run across old Aragon, or any one of them four bad Mexicans, I'm going to make a show. And as for that big brindle dog of his—well, he's sure going to get roped and drug if he don't mend his ways. Come on, let's ketch up our horses and go in for a little time!"

"I'll go you!" agreed Phil with enthusiasm, and half an hour later, each on his favorite horse, they were clattering down the canyon. At the turn of the trail, where it swung into the

"Be careful there!" warned Bud, suddenly fixing his eyes on one of the four retainers. "If you touch that gun I'll kill you!"

There was a pause, in which the Mexicans sat frozen to their saddles, and then De Lancey broke the silence.

"You must not think, Senor Aragon," he began, speaking with a certain bitterness, "that you can carry your point like this. My friend here is a Texan, and if your men stir he will kill them. But there is a law in this country for every man—what is it that you want?"

"I want this mining claim," shouted Aragon, "that you have so unjustly taken from me through that scoundrel Mendez! And I want you to step aside, so that I can set up my monuments and take possession of it."

"The Senor Aragon has not been to the agente mineral today," suggested De Lancey suavely. "If he had taken the trouble he would not—"

"Enough!" cried Aragon, still trying to carry it off cavalierly; "I sent my servant to the mining agent yesterday and he reported that the permit had lapsed."

"If he had taken the pains to inquire for new permits, however," returned De Lancey, "he would have found that one has been issued to me. I am now a Mexican citizen, like yourself."

"You!" screamed Aragon, his eyes bulging with astonishment; and then, finding himself tricked, he turned suddenly upon one of his retainers and struck him with his whip.

"Son of a goat!" he stormed. "Pig! Is this the way you obey my orders?"

But though he raved and scolded, he had gone too far, and there was no putting the blame on his servant. In his desire to humiliate the hated gringos he had thrown down all his guards, and even De Lancey saw all too clearly what his intentions in the matter had been.

"Spare your cursing, Senor Aragon," he said, "and after this," he added, "you can save your pretty words, too—for somebody else. We shall remain here and hold our property."

"Ha! You Americans!" exclaimed Aragon, as he chewed bitterly on his defeat. "You will rob us of everything—even our government. So you are a Mexican citizen, eh? You must value this barren mine very highly to give up the protection of your government. But perhaps you are acquainted with a man named Kruger?"

"He would sell his honor any time to defraud a Mexican of his rights, and I doubt not it was he who sent you here. Yes, I have known it from the first—but I will fool him yet!"

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Aragon lane, Bud took down his rope and smiled in anticipation.

"You go on ahead," he said, shaking out his loop, "and I'll try to put the catgut on Brindle."

"Off like a flash!" answered De Lancey, and, putting the spurs to his fiery bay, he went dashing down the street, scattering chickens and hogs in all directions. Behind came Bud, rolling jocularly in his saddle, and as the dogs rushed out after his pardner he twirled his loop once and laid it skilfully across the big brindle's back.

But roping dogs is a difficult task at best, and Bud was out of practice. The sudden blow struck Brindle to the ground and the loop came away unflinched. The Texan laughed, shifting in his saddle.

"Come again!" commented Bud, leaning sideways as he coiled his rope, and as the womenfolk and idlers came

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A job lot of belts and packs, shuffled patiently past the Americans, they flashed the whites of their eyes and rumbled a chorus of "Adios!"

"Adios, Americanos!" they called, gazing enviously at their fine horses, and Phil in his turn touched his hat and wished them all Godspeed.

"Poor devils!" he murmured, as the last tottering camp-followers, laden with their burdens, brought up the rear and a white-skinned Spanish officer saluted from his horse; "what do those little pelones know about liberty and justice, or the game that is being played? Wearing the same uniforms that they had when they fought for Diaz, and now they are fighting for Madero. Next year they may be working for Orozco or Huerta or Salazar."

"Sure," muttered Bud; "but that ain't the question. If they're rebels in the hills, where do we get off?"

CHAPTER XI.

The plaza at Fortuna, ordinarily so peaceful and sleepy, was alive with hurrying men when Bud and Phil reached town. Over at the station a special engine was wheezing and blowing after its heavy run and, from the train of commandeered ore cars behind, a swarm of soldiers were leaping to the ground. On the porch of the hotel Don Juan de Dios Brachamonte was making violent signals with his hands, and as they rode up he hurried out to meet them.

"My gracious, boys," he cried. "It's a good thing you came into town! Bernardo Bravo has come over the mountains and he's marching to take Moco-tezum!"

"Why, that doesn't make any difference to us!" answered Phil. "Moco-tezum is eighty miles from here—and look at all the soldiers. How many men has Bernardo got?"

"Well, that I do not know," responded Don Juan; "some say more and some less, but if you boys hadn't come in I would have sent a man to fetch you. Just as soon as a revolution begins the back country becomes unsafe for Americans. Some of these low characters are likely to murder you if they think you have any money."

"Well, we haven't," put in Bud; "but we've got a mine—and we're going to keep it, too."

"Aw, Bernardo Bravo hasn't got any men!" scoffed Phil; "I bet this is a false alarm. He got whipped out of his boots over in Chihuahua last fall, and he's been up in the Sierra Madre ever since. Probably come down to steal a little beef."

"Why, Don Juan, Bud and I lived right next to a trail all last year and if we'd listened to one-tenth of the revolts stories we heard we wouldn't have taken out an ounce of gold. I'm going to get my denouncement papers tomorrow, and I'll bet you work that mine all summer and never know the difference. These rebels won't hurt you any, anyhow!"

"No! Only beg a little grub!" added Bud scornfully. "Come on, Phil; let's go over and look at the soldiers—it's that bunch of Yaquis we saw up at Agua Negra."

They tied their horses to the rack and, leaving the solicitous Don Juan to sputter, hurried over to the yard. From the heavy metal ore cars, each a rolling fortress in itself, the last of the active Yaquis were helping out their women and pet dogs, while the rest, talking and laughing in high spirits, were strung out along the track in a perfunctory line.

If the few officers in command had ever attempted to teach them military discipline, the result was not apparent in the line they formed; but any man who looked at their swarthy faces, the hawklike profiles, and deep-set, steady eyes, would know that they were fighters.

After all, a straight line on parade has very little to do with actual warfare and these men had proved their worth under fire.

To be sure, it was the fire of Mexican guns, and perhaps that was why the officers were so quiet and unassertive; for every one of these big, up-standing Indians had been captured in the Yaqui wars and deported to the henequen fields of Yucatan to die in the miasma and heat.

But they had come from a hardy breed and the whirligig of fortune was flying fast—Madero defeated Porfirio Diaz; fresh revolutions broke out against the victor and, looking about in desperation for soldiers to fill his ranks, Madero fell upon the Yaquis.

Trained warriors for generations, of a race so fierce that the ancient Aztecs had been turned aside by them in their empire-founding migration, they were the very men to whip back the rebels, if he could but win them to his side.

So Madero had approached Chief Bule, whom Diaz had taken under a flag of truce, and soon the agreement was made. In return for faithful service, Mexico would give back to the Indians the one thing they had been fighting a hundred and sixty years to attain, their land along the Rio Yaqui; and there they should be permitted to live in peace as their ancestors had done before them.

And so, with a thousand or more of his men, the crafty old war chief had taken service in the federal army, though his mind, poisoned perhaps by the treachery he had suffered, was not entirely free from guile.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Daily Thought.

As the flowers carry dewdrops, trembling on the edge of the petals, and ready to fall at the first waft of wind or brush of wing of bird, so the heart should carry its beaded words of thanksgiving, and at the first breath of heavenly favor let down the shower perfumed with the heart's gratitude.

—Becher.

"I'm open for conviction," said one lady. She liked her regular soap and washing powder. She tried RUB-NO-MORE just to see. Now you ought to see how easily she keeps house dirt-free with this "workless" dirt remover.



RUB-NO-MORE WASHING POWDER is a sudless dirt-remover for clothes. It cleans your dishes, sinks, toilets and cleans and sweetens your milk crocks. It kills germs. It does not need hot water.

RUB-NO-MORE Washing Powder RUB-NO-MORE Carbo Naptha Soap

Five Cents—All Grocers The Rub-No-More Co., Ft. Wayne, Ind.

All the Difference. The four persons were having some trouble in getting seated as the train rolled out of the station. One, a truthful looking old lady, insisted on taking a seat facing the front of the train.

"You know, I can never ride with my back to the engine," she said. "But, auntie, this train hasn't got any engine," suggested one of the younger ones selfishly. "It has a motor."

And the old lady, mollified, sat comfortably with her back to the motor.

Good Angler. Miss Rand—Why, Kate, how do you do? I haven't seen you for several years